

Remarks to the Community in Iowa City, Iowa February 10, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you, Erin. Thank you to the University of Iowa Band. You were great. I thank the basketball team for ending their practice early so we could come and gather, and I hope they have practiced enough to do very well. I think they have.

I congratulate the University of Iowa on all of its successes, athletic and academic, and I think we should, in addition to football and women's and men's basketball, mention the long success of the wrestling team here, which has always impressed me.

I want to thank Allison Miller, who spoke here before, for her work on the Clinton-Gore campaign. And I thank Bob Rush for running for Congress and trying to change the direction of the House of Representatives. I want to thank the Iowans who have contributed to the success of our administration, and in particular two: your former attorney general, Bonnie Campbell, who directs our Office of Violence Against Women; and the President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, who directs jobs for America by getting investments abroad, Ruth Harkin. I thank her for the wonderful job she has done.

You know, I'm glad to be back in Iowa, and I was glad to hear Senator Harkin giving you all those reasons you should vote in the caucus in just a couple of days. He didn't give you the best reason of all, from my purely selfish point of view. You see, I've always admired the Iowa caucuses, and the last time I ran, for some reason I could get almost no votes here. [*Laughter*] And so I would like, just one time before I have to retire from politics, to get a great vote in the Iowa caucus. So I ask you to please go out and do that.

I have been privileged to serve you now for 3 years. And before we talk about the next 4, just let me thank you for the last 3: for the support I received in Iowa in 1992; for the incredible experience that Hillary and I and Al and Tipper had when our bus drove through here, and the times I came back, and the people I met, the stories I heard, the things I learned; for the opportunity to come here when you were reeling from the floods, with our Federal Emergency Management Agency and the other agen-

cies, to try to help Iowa put itself back together and get back on a good foot to the future; for the rural summit we had here, where people came from all over America to Iowa to talk about our plans for rebuilding rural America as well as urban and suburban America. I thank you for all that.

And let me also say there was a sense in which, while I only came to Iowa on these occasions, Iowa was always there with me because of the heroic, courageous, never-failing, energetic, determined stands that Tom Harkin has taken in the United States Senate every day he has served.

My fellow Americans, I know that because Iowa has this incredible responsibility of beginning the process of nominating the President, and because so much time and money is spent here, ever more on television ads, it seems, this year, there is always a lot of discussion about what the Iowa caucus means and what the election is about. And very often it's in terms of, is this going to be an election where grassroots campaigns will be less significant than television ads? Is this going to be an election where some kind of message works better than another? Is this going to be an election where economics or social issues and fundamental values dominate? In other words, there's all this sort of handicapping that goes on, and I guess you get used to it. But let me tell you: This election fundamentally is about you, and don't you ever forget it. It's about your responsibilities. It's about your opportunities. It's about your country. It's about your future. It is about you. And you must make sure that is exactly what it is about all year long until November.

As I said in my State of the Union Address and have said all across America, we are now living in a time of profound change, more profound than any period of our history since we moved from being fundamentally a rural, agricultural society to being a more urban, industrial society 100 years ago. This change we are now going through is as profound as that.

Senator Harkin mentioned Bill Gates, the great founder of Microsoft. You know, he's written a book about the future, the information superhighway, and he says that the revolution

in communications brought on by digital chips will be more profound than anything that has happened since the printing press was invented in Europe by Gutenberg 500 years ago. That is the dimension of the period of change in which you live.

How does this affect you? We're changing the way we work, where mind counts more than muscle. We're changing the way we communicate because of the information explosion. We're changing the workplace itself. Workplaces tend to be less bureaucratic, less hierarchical, and smaller. And it's great if you're on the upside of it, but not so good if you're like a lot of my classmates from grade school and high school and college, who are being laid off from some of these companies as they downsize.

If you change the way you work, if you change the way you communicate, if you change the way the workplace works, if the marketplace changes so that financial markets and markets for goods and services are all global, the way markets for farm products have been for years, inevitably we'll have to change the way we live and the way we related to each other and the rest of the world. And that means the roles of our Government must change, too.

But our Government must be the servant of the people. And so, to decide what we should do for the next 4 years and into the future, we have to first ask ourselves, what kind of country do we want to be? What is our vision for the future? How are we doing now? That will answer the question of which policies we should pursue.

My vision for the future is one in which this incredible age of possibility—there are literally more possibilities available for personal fulfillment today and tomorrow than at any time in our history—I want those possibilities available to every American without regard to race or gender or income or region. Every American who is willing to work for them ought to have them.

I want America to be strong enough and good enough to still be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom, as long as we are needed to try to heal the divisions in this troubled world and as long as we need to be a leading force to protect our own security and advance the quality of our own lives. And more than anything else, I want this country to grow and work and live together. I am sick and tired

of seeing us divided by short-term political strategies that are bad for our country.

Now if you share that vision, you have to ask yourself, how are we doing? And if you ask yourself, how are we doing, you have to answer, we're doing better than we were, but not nearly good enough. That is the short answer.

Look at the economy. Nearly 8 million new jobs, a big drop in the unemployment rate, an explosion in the growth of manufacturing jobs here in Iowa, the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation in 27 years, a 15-year high in homeownership for 3 years in a row, record numbers of new small businesses. Interestingly enough, businesses owned by women alone in the last 3 years have created more new jobs than the Fortune 500 have laid off. That is good.

In each of the last 3 years, a record number of new self-made millionaires—not people who inherited it—people who had the talent God gave them, developed it, had a good idea, and went out and made it on their own. That is good for America, and we should be proud of that. We have all-time-high exports of our products. Our exports are growing faster than our imports for a change. You can see it in what's happened to corn prices and soybean prices in Iowa. You can see it in what's happened to high-tech telecommunications exports all across the country.

That is the good news. But what is the whole truth? Half the American people still haven't gotten a raise in terms of what their incomes will buy in the last 10 or 15 years. Some Americans who worked hard and played by the rules are just being left behind in all these changes.

I had lunch with a good friend of mine from out West who is a terrifically successful businessman. By blind accident of fate, 40 years ago he and I went to the same little red brick schoolhouse in our hometown in Arkansas. And so did his brother, a man with a college education, a good man, he worked hard, almost 50 years old. His kids are ready to go to college. Twice in the last 5 years his brother has lost his job because his company has been bought out by another one, and they went through one of these downsizes.

So we have a lot of good news and a lot to be happy about. But the American dream and all the possibilities of this age have not been open to everyone. That's what the Rural

Development Conference was all about. There are pockets in our cities and in our rural areas that this has not reached.

Look at our leadership in the world. I am grateful that we've made progress for peace, from Northern Ireland to southern Africa to the Middle East to Bosnia to Haiti. I'm grateful for that. I am grateful that there are no nuclear missiles pointed at the United States anymore.

But we know the work of peace and freedom, of security is far from over. We saw it yesterday in an act of venality and cowardice when the peace was broken in Britain and that building was blown up and innocent people were thrown in to the hospital, in total violation of the wishes and dreams of both the Catholic and the Protestant people in the street in Northern Ireland who came out to cheer the First Lady and me because they want the United States to keep the peace and to move to a resolution. We know these are problems.

We saw it when the Prime Minister of Israel, my dear friend, was shot down at the moment of his greatest triumph, pushing for peace. We see it when, in Japan, they can break open a little vial of poison gas in the subway and kill hundreds of people like that. We see it when terrorists come in to our country from other countries and blow up the World Trade Center. We see it when terrorists can exchange information over the Internet about how to make simple bombs like the one that killed our beloved fellow citizens in Oklahoma City.

So I say to you: This is a much more peaceful, secure world than it was. But we have a lot of work to do to free the world of the dangers of weapons of mass destruction, to free the world of the dangers of terrorism and drug trafficking and organized crime. We have to work on this. And we cannot withdraw from the world. If we want a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty this year, if we want a global effort to preserve the environment, we can't say America cannot be bothered with you. We have to lead the world for peace and freedom.

How are we doing? Perhaps most important in how we are doing is that there is some evidence that we are getting our act together again as a country, that we are coming back together around our basic values. In the last 3 years nationwide, the crime rate is down, the welfare rolls are down, the food stamp rolls are down, the poverty rolls are down; the teen pregnancy rates are down now for 2 years in a row. That

is good news for America, and we should rejoice in that.

But the crime rate is still too high. There are still too many people trapped on welfare who want to be independent. There are still too many children having children. And there is still too much that doesn't make sense in this country. We all know that. We can't stop now.

So what is this election about? I think it's about our challenges for the future and how we're going to meet them together. You have to do that before you can answer this great question about what the role of our Government is and what the President should be doing.

This is not that tired old debate about big Government versus small Government. The Democrats and this President and our administration, we cut the deficit in half and reduced the Government to its smallest size in 30 long years. But we cut 18,000 pages of Federal regulation that were useless. We closed thousands of offices we didn't need anymore. That's all well and good. But we also—while this is not about big Government—there is no more big Government—it's also not about having Government walk away and leave the American people to fend for themselves in the global marketplace where they won't amount to a hill of beans unless they work together and stand together and make the most of their potential.

You know, it's amazing to me when I hear these debates and people act as if what we really ought to do is just give everybody and each other a good letting-alone. Well, we just had the Super Bowl, and whenever we have a Super Bowl, the stars get all the television time. That's all right; that's probably the way it ought to be. All I know is that the team that won the Super Bowl last time won in large measure because the guys whose names you may not know who were playing from tackle to tackle on offense and defense made them a team. And a lot of us could look good playing on a team like that.

Iowa went to a bowl game this year not because of the stars, just because of the team. Your basketball teams are doing well not just because of the stars, because it's a team. We've got to put everybody on the field in America, and we have to work together as a team. That's how we're going to do it.

And that means you need a Government that's less bureaucratic and does fewer stupid

things but is still strong. I didn't hear anybody in Iowa begging for a weak FEMA when the floods came down. I don't hear any farmers in Iowa begging for a weak trade ambassador when we've got a good deal so we can sell our farm products around the world. I don't hear anybody here in this campus, where you've got the direct loan program and you know it costs less, you have better repayment terms—no one in America will ever have an excuse not to go to college again if you can pay the loans back as a percentage of your income, so you can never be broken down by the burden of college debt. Who wants a weak student loan program? I don't believe we want that.

With families all over America driven into welfare partly because absent parents don't pay their child support, we have record child support collections this year. I don't think you want an America with a weak child support collection system. You want an America with a strong child support collection system.

We know we have to create most of our jobs from small businesses and that that's where most of the new jobs are coming from. I don't think we want a weak Small Business Administration. The one you have has cut the loan form from one inch to two pages, has cut down the delay time a lot, is 40 percent smaller in terms of budget, but we have doubled the loan volume of the SBA. And we'd better keep doing that if we're going to create more jobs through small businesses in America. We need a strong, strong SBA.

So what we really need is a Government that is a partner that helps people to make the most of their own lives, that helps families and communities to seize their opportunities and meet their challenges, that puts all the players on the field and helps us work together. That is why, in the State of the Union, I said our country—not our Government but our country—has seven great challenges for the future.

First, to strengthen our families and give your childhoods back to all America's children. Too many have been robbed of their childhoods for too long. That's what we were trying to do with our tough stand against illegal teenage smoking. That's what we were trying to do yesterday or the day before when I signed the telecommunications bill to open up vast new opportunities in information and entertainment and create tens of thousands of jobs, but also give parents in their homes that V-chip to protect their small

children, because just last week we saw another study saying that hour after hour after hour, week after week, year after year of exposure to mindless violence numbs our young people to the impact, the consequences, and the moral dimensions of violent behavior. We must stand against it. It is wrong.

We need every young—our second challenge is to make sure everybody in America can do what those of you who are students here are doing, getting a world-class education adequate to the 21st century. Every school, every library in this country should be hooked up to the Internet by the year 2000, and every child ought to be able to access it. Every State ought to have as low a dropout rate and as high a student performance rate as the State of Iowa does. We ought to have high national standards for performance.

And we need to open the doors of college wider, not close them shut. We should keep the direct loan program. We should keep the national service program. We should expand the Pell grants. We ought to have a million people in work-study programs who are—young people who are willing to work themselves through college. And if we're going to have a tax cut, we ought to have a tax cut for the cost of college tuition all across America.

Our third great challenge is to do something to give every family that's willing to work access to the economic security that is coming to the most successful families in America. At a minimum, since people are changing jobs, that means that every family ought to have access to affordable health care that they can't lose just because somebody in their family gets sick.

Let me just call a timeout here. Here's something you don't have to wait for the election to do. There is a bipartisan bill with 45 cosponsors that was voted out of the Senate committee unanimously. It is on the floor of the Senate just waiting for the leadership to let it come up, sponsored by Senator Kassebaum of Kansas, a Republican Senator, and Democratic Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts. And this bill is a simple bill. It just says that you can't be deprived of your health insurance when you change jobs, and you can't lose your health insurance if you or somebody in your family gets sick. It is a simple bill. All the consumer groups have endorsed it; the chamber of commerce has endorsed it; the National Association of Manufacturers is for it. Everybody's for it except the

health insurance lobby. It was voted out unanimously, and we cannot get it to a vote in the Senate. Tell the United States Senators that are here campaigning to go back and vote that bill out, send it to the House, send it to my desk. Give the American people the protection they need.

Let me just give you two other examples I feel very strongly about. I think if American families lose their jobs, they ought to be able to immediately—immediately, not a month later—get into an education and training program. If they're grossly underemployed, they ought to be able to do it. I have given the Congress a proposal to take all these scores of training programs the Federal Government has developed over the years, collapse them into a funding stream and give every unemployed person in America a voucher they can take to their local community college, to their nearest education and training institution to immediately begin to acquire the skills that go back into the workplace. It's a simple, direct, good idea for America.

The third thing we ought to do is to recognize that most people who are working for small businesses, they still need retirement. And we have a proposal to make it easier for people who work for small businesses and their employers to take out pension plans. We also ought to protect the pension plans that exist. Just a year or so ago, I had to sign a bill to protect 8½ million Americans whose pensions were in danger and to secure the pensions of 40 million others. You remember it wasn't so many years ago that all these people were losing their life savings, their pensions because they had been allowed to be abused by the employers. I say to you, we should not allow people to go back and raid these pension funds and put the pensions of America's workers at risk again. That is not the right thing to do, and we should stand against it.

Let me just say one last thing about economic security. I hear a lot of talk in Washington about family values. And a lot of the people who talk about it act like the worst thing that ever happened to America was the minimum wage. If we don't raise the minimum wage this year, it will fall to a 40-year low in terms of what it will buy. You cannot raise children on \$4.25 an hour. But millions of Americans, millions of your fellow countrymen and women, are not on welfare, they are not abusing the system.

They are the real heroes in this country. They will get up Monday morning and Tuesday morning and sometimes 6 days a week and sometimes more, and they will go to work to try to support their family for \$4.25 an hour because Washington has turned a deaf ear to them. No one should do that. If we are pro-work and pro-family, we ought to raise the minimum wage. It is wrong.

Our fourth challenge is to continue the struggle to take our streets back, to make them safe again, to make our schools and our neighborhoods safe again. I am proud of the fact that this administration has led an effort to put 100,000 more police officers on our streets and that community police are preventing crime, not just catching criminals. I am proud of the fact that the Brady law has kept over 40,000 people with criminal records from getting guns. I am proud of that.

But I tell you, we cannot stop until a certain test is met. We know that every society has crime. We know there will always be violence. We know things will happen among people that make them do things they shouldn't do. You know what the test is for when crime doesn't have to be at the top of our agenda? When every one of you believes when you see a story on the news or you read about it in the paper involving a crime, you see it as the exception, not the rule; you stop being deadened to it; you stop saying, "Oh, the news is coming on. We'll have 5 minutes of crime, and then we'll see what else is going to happen."

Now, what I want to say to you is, I have seen in city after city after city in this country, the crime rate plummeting. I am telling you we can take our streets back. But I also want you to know that the biggest problem we have is the abysmal condition of childhood. For while the crime rate is going down in America, random violence among juveniles under 18 is going up. While drug use is going down in America, random drug use among juveniles is going up. We cannot jail our way out of this problem. We can be tough, but we have to be smart. We have to reach out to our children and give them a future they deserve.

I will be brief about this one because I imagine I'm preaching to the choir, but we must drop the crazy idea that in order to grow our economy we have to absolutely destroy our environment. We have to preserve and enhance the

quality of the environment if we expect this country to go forward.

You know, I had a very interesting conversation with the President of China a few months ago. And we have some differences with China, and he said, "Sometimes I think the United States looks at us as a future threat, and you want to contain us." And I said, "No, Mr. President, I don't." But I said, "There is one threat you present to our future, but it's our fault as much as yours." And he looked at me with a sort of quizzical look in his eye, and he said, "Whatever do you mean?" I said, "Well, your economy is growing like crazy. You're buying a lot of our farm products now. We're buying a lot of your products. Everybody in China wants to get rich, like everybody in America, and I don't blame you. But you have over 1.2 billion people, and if every one of your people gets an automobile, like every one of our people has, we're not going to be able to breathe the air together. We will be choking together, in common."

That's why I've worked for the clean car. That's why I supported ethanol. That's why I've done all these things to try to find a way to grow the economy and preserve the environment. That's why we shouldn't cut environmental protection. We shouldn't weaken environmental regulations. We shouldn't walk back on safe food and safe drugs and clean air and clean water. We should stay the course of protecting the environment.

I've already had my say about this, but the most unpopular one of these challenges or the one that elicits a giant yawn from most people when I say we've got to maintain our leadership in the world for peace and freedom. And a lot of people say well—I mean, I get the feeling that a lot of Americans, when I said that at the State of the Union, were sitting in their homes and they said, "Well, go on, Mr. President, I trust you. You've done pretty well on that. But I wish you wouldn't even bother me with it. I've got too many problems to think about at home. The cold war is over. The Russians aren't going to bomb us anymore. Let's forget about that."

But remember what I told you: Our second biggest market in terms of growth is Latin America. If you want them to cooperate with us in the economy, if you want them to stop sending drugs to our shores to pollute our kids, just remember, we have to cooperate with them.

We have arrested, in the last 2 years, seven of the eight leaders of the Cali drug cartel, the biggest one in the world, because we cooperated. And they put their lives on the line; we didn't have to do that. You can't say, "Well, we'll be with you when it's good for us, and meanwhile don't call."

You know what Bosnia is about, in part? It's about stopping that war from spreading to other countries and dragging the Americans in, where we'd have soldiers in battle and getting shot and killed. It's about saying to the Europeans, "We don't want you to close up. We want you to be open. We want you to be open in trade. We want you to be open in ideas. We want you to be our allies, our friends, our partners in the future. And if we have to stand with you now because we are still the strongest country in the world after the cold war, we will do it to stop that kind of slaughter, because we're partners in the future."

If we want to go to Pakistan, for example, and say, "We think there's a suspected terrorist there. Will you arrest this person, even if it costs you something politically, and make it possible for us to bring someone back here to justice?" We can't say that we have no concern about India, we have no concern about Pakistan, we don't care what's going on on the Indian subcontinent, it's a long way away. We'd better care. We had better care.

If you want a safe world, if you want these countries to say, "We'll never develop nuclear missiles," if you want them to say, as I am pleading with them to say this year, "No more nuclear testing; it is over," we have to cooperate in the world.

The last challenge is, together you and I have got to make this democracy work, and we've got to make people think more of it. Every survey talks about how cynical people are, how skeptical they are. Even people who say, "My circumstances are better," say, "I'm worried about my country, don't have any faith in my Government." It's your Government.

I've worked hard for political reform. We passed lobby reform. We passed a law that says Congress has to live under the laws they impose on the private sector. We passed a law limiting the ability of Congress to require State and local governments to spend money if they won't help them do it. They ought to pass two more things: the line item veto they have been promising me for 3 years, and they ought to pass a cam-

paign finance reform law that gives power back to the American people.

But make no mistake about it, my fellow Americans, no matter what we do there, unless people like you all across America do things like show up at these caucuses and tell people you believe in your country and talk about the problems, but also brag on what's going right, we can't turn this country around. Cynicism is a cheap, phony excuse for inaction. It is a poor shield against having to assume your own responsibility.

This is a great country. Whenever I go overseas people say to me, if they follow trends here, "How could the American people be cynical? You have a stronger economy than any other advanced country. You have a smaller deficit as a percentage of your income already than any other advanced country. You have a lower tax burden as a percentage of your income than any other advanced country. You've spent half your money for the last 30 years on defense, on Social Security, and on Medicare. You won the cold war. You cut the elderly poverty rate in half and senior citizens in America have the highest expectancy of any group—life expectancy of any senior group in the entire world. America should be proud of itself."

That's what I say to you. We know we can solve problems. What we need to do is to stop whining about it and carping about it and get on with doing it, and doing it together—together.

Let me end where I began. This election is not about me, it's not about all those folks run-

ning television ads about each other and me—[*laughter*]. It's not about some spin about what this does or doesn't mean this time, or whether it's more TV ads and less grassroots. It's about you. And an election ratifies and makes explicit the truth of any democracy that ultimately you are the boss. You have the power. You must have vision. You must know what you want this country to look like for your children and your grandchildren. You must know what kind of life you want to live. You must understand that there will be more out there for you if you're willing to work for it than any previous generation of Americans. And you must understand that in order to really enjoy it you've got to make it available to all Americans who don't have the capacity to reach it now.

The central lesson I have learned in 3 years as your President is that we desperately, desperately, desperately have to face the fact that we must go forward together. If we do, there is no stopping us. The best is yet to come, and your future will be the glory of all American history.

Thank you. God bless you, and come out Monday night.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon in the Carver Hawkeye Arena at the University of Iowa. In his remarks, he referred to University of Iowa students Erin Barber and Allison Miller, Clinton/Gore campus coordinator; and Bob Rush, Clinton/Gore chair, Johnson County.

Remarks to the Community in Mason City, Iowa February 10, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you for that wonderful, wonderful welcome. I do feel that I have a home in the heartland, and if I hadn't felt it before I got here tonight, I sure do now. I thank you for your warmth and your enthusiasm.

Thank you, Dr. Buettner. Thank you, Deo Koenigs. Thank you, Ruth Harkin, for doing such a wonderful job in helping to create opportunities for our businesses and for our working people through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. And thank you, Senator Tom Har-

kin, for continuing to have a heart and continuing to have the stomach and the will to stand up and fight for the interests of ordinary Americans when so many others have backed away.

I have had a wonderful time here already. I landed the airplane just in time to catch the snow and the wind coming back. [*Laughter*] Impeccable timing. And then I went over to Clear Lake to the farm co-op. And we had a wonderful—anybody here? [*Applause*] And I had a